

February 10, 2000

## **Minimum Wage Hypocrisy**

# **Look Who Wants a Clean Bankruptcy Bill**

President Clinton didn't inhale, Vice President Gore invented the Internet, and Senate Minority Leader Daschle wants a clean bankruptcy bill. Now that bankruptcy reform is before a House-Senate conference, Senator Daschle wants the conference committee to remove the Republican minimum wage increase and small business tax cuts in the Senate version of the bill (*AP*, 2/9/00):

***I'd take out the minimum wage, I'd take out these tax provisions. Let's look at tax provisions free-standing. And then let's pass a good bankruptcy bill. . .***

Could it be true? Did Senator Daschle really want a clean bill all along? Or could it be that he himself held up the bankruptcy bill until given a chance to attach these items, was then beaten by a better Republican amendment, and is now retreating from his own failed strategy?

Let's check the replay. Last October, Senator Daschle said (*Congressional Record*, page S13365, 10/28/99):

***We have to have an opportunity, for example, to offer minimum wage on the bankruptcy bill when it comes up. . . .***

Despite some reservations, Senator Daschle also supported his party's decision to attach a net tax increase to the bankruptcy bill (*Congressional Record*, page S14251, 11/8/1999). Ultimately, the Republican minimum-wage increase/small-business tax cut amendment prevailed over the Democrat minimum-wage increase/tax-hike amendment.

What really happened is that Senator Daschle is now being criticized for that strategy by his own party. As Senator Leahy told reporters and Senator Daschle (*AP*, 2/9/00):

***Unfortunately, adding the minimum wage and the tax things shouldn't have been done.***

Perhaps not, but that was Senator Daschle's choice. He shouldn't be able to slow down the Senate by forcing it to reopen an already-resolved issue (minimum wage) simply because he lost.

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RPC staff contact: Michael F. Cannon 4-2946